

# BAY AREA EXPRESS LANES

## Public Involvement and Communications Approach



In collaboration with:



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***Note:*** This document is intended for internal MTC project team use and to facilitate communications coordination between MTC and Express Lane Network Partner Agencies.

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## **I. Introduction**

Upon completion in 2035, the Bay Area will have 550 miles of express lanes operated by MTC, the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) and the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC). MTC will operate 270 miles of express lanes on freeways in Alameda, Contra Costa and Solano Counties, including I-80, I-680 and I-880 as well as on the westbound approaches to the San Francisco-Oakland Bay, San Mateo and Dumbarton Bridges. VTA and ACTC will operate the remaining 280 miles.

Given its many partners, its interaction with other corridor management strategies, and issues surrounding its acceptance, it is critical that the MTC express lane program develop a comprehensive public information strategy to deliver consistent, collaborative messages with the goal of presenting one “voice” to the public. It is also critical that MTC’s efforts build on, and collaborate with, the existing efforts of its partners, both those that have launched express lanes and corresponding communication strategies, and those that are implementing other corridor management strategies.

This document will evolve as Phase I moves toward construction and completion. It is currently focused on the project development stage and messages and activities will be revisited and augmented as the program moves into pre-construction and construction stages. As projects approach the operational stage, the strategy will focus more on marketing and education to demonstrate effective use of the express lanes.

## **II. Goals of the Public Information Effort**

MTC’s goals for conducting a proactive public involvement and communication program for express lanes are to:

- Educate a broad range of stakeholders and the general public about the Express Lanes Network, its objectives, benefits and schedule (including focused, project specific information).
- Build support and understanding for Bay Area Express Lanes and how they will be implemented.
- Create consistent messaging and communications across the region.
- Ensure messaging reaches the broadest regional audience through their desired communications platform.
- Create a framework for MTC and partner agencies to communicate about their projects respective of corridor-specific messages.
- Leverage the communications strategies and experiences of other express lanes operators in the region.
- Identify issues and areas for educating the general public on how express lanes will operate and their benefits to the traveling public.
- Proactively respond to community concerns and issues.

### **III. Audiences**

Project audiences include:

- General Public
- Corridor Travelers, segmented by
  - Solo drivers
  - Carpoolers
  - Transit riders
  - Drivers of other exempt vehicles
- Advocacy Groups for social justice, the environment, transit, local control, etc.
- Residential and Business Organizations
- Partner Agencies (CMAs Caltrans, CHP, BATA)
- Municipalities (city staff including traffic engineers)
- Elected Officials (Boards/Commissions/Councils)
- Transit Agencies
- Media

### **IV. Outreach Approach**

Outreach will occur along the following four tracks:

- 1) General Public Awareness and Education,
- 2) Partner & Stakeholder Outreach,
- 3) Environmental Process Public Outreach, and
- 4) Operational Public Education & Marketing.

The purpose, primary audiences and primary outreach methods for each of these tracks is described in Table 1. Table 2 shows the timing of each effort, while Table 3 shows the key messages to be conveyed through each track. Sections IV.A to IV.D provide additional details related to the strategy for each track.

**TABLE 1: OUTREACH APPROACH SUMMARY**

<b>Outreach Track</b>	<b>Purpose(s)</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Primary Outreach Tools<sup>1</sup></b>
1) General Public Awareness and Education	Convey messages applicable to all audiences. Focus on the project benefits and high-level plans. Create a general understanding and awareness of express lanes.	All audiences identified in Section III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Website (MTC and 511)</li> <li>Traditional media (radio, press releases, PSAs, foster relationships with media)</li> <li>General fact sheet</li> <li>General FAQs</li> </ul>
2) Partner & Stakeholder Outreach	Reach out to county partners to develop a plan of action for building support for the express lanes in each county. See detailed description below in IV.B.  Address concerns from advocacy or community groups.	1) Partner Agencies 2) Other stakeholders determined with partner agencies; such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Municipalities</li> <li>b. Elected officials</li> <li>c. Advocacy groups</li> <li>d. Community groups</li> <li>e. Transit agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Face to face meetings</li> <li>Presentations to boards or councils</li> <li>One-on-one briefings</li> <li>Other: TBD per partner agency meetings (e.g., targeted fact sheets, e-mail distribution)</li> </ul>
3) Environmental Process Public Outreach	Fulfill requirements of the environmental clearance process	General public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public meetings</li> <li>Online meeting to duplicate in-person effort</li> <li>Environmental doc noticing</li> </ul>
4) Operational Public Education & Marketing	Explain to potential customers how to use the lanes and encourage use	Corridor travelers primarily Business and residential organizations All audiences in general	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social media</li> <li>Traditional media (e.g., radio spots)</li> <li>Website (Bay Area Express Lanes, 511, FasTrak<sup>®</sup> CSC)</li> <li>Direct mail/email</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Several tools are applicable to all categories, even if they are not identified as “primary.”

			distribution/Speakers bureau
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**TABLE 2: TIMING OF EACH MTC OUTREACH TRACK (See Table 5 for Regional Network Track 3 Schedule)**

	2013								2014								2015															
	M ay	Ju ne	Ju ly	A ug	Se p	O ct	N ov	D ec	Ja n	Fe b	M ar	A pr	M ay	Ju n	Ju l	A ug	Se p	O ct	N ov	D ec	Ja n	Fe b	M ar	A pr	M ay	Ju n	Ju l	A ug	Se p	O ct	N ov	D ec
Public Awareness and General Education																																
Partner & Stakeholder Outreach	On-going (e.g., through the PIWG) with a more focused effort occurring spring/summer 2013																															
Phase 1 Environmental Process Public Outreach			Timing depends on level of environmental document and other considerations, but will occur within this range. <b>Additional details about the environmental process public outreach are shown in Section IV.C</b>																													
Operational Public Education & Marketing																																

Table 3 shows the relative importance of the messaging summarized in Section V to each of the four outreach tracks, with “1” being the highest priority messages and “2” being somewhat less important.

**TABLE 3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MESSAGING AND OUREACH TRACKS**

	BENEFITS	SYSTEM COORDINATION	PROJECT DELIVERY	FUNDING & REVENUE	TRANSIT & RIDESHARE	EQUITY	OPERATIONS
Public Awareness and General Education	1	1	Initially: 2 Eventually: 1	2	1	2	Initially: 2 Eventually: 1
Partner & Stakeholder Outreach	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Environmental Process Public Outreach	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
Operational Public Education & Marketing	2	1	2	2	2	2	1



#### **IV.A TRACK 1: Public Awareness and General Education**

Public awareness and general education efforts will focus on messages that are important to convey to all audiences to manage expectations and information, dispel myths and build support for the program. This effort will be continuous throughout the program and will involve maintaining an always-evolving website, fostering relationships with the media and conveying the high-level messages about program benefits as opportunities arise.

#### **IV.B TRACK 2: Partner & Stakeholder Outreach**

Although the network of express lanes will be regional in nature with a corresponding regional vision, there are different project sponsors and operators. MTC will collaborate and coordinate with these agencies to plan and implement outreach within their counties. This coordination will:

- Inform and manage communications about multiple projects within a corridor,
- Ensure one consistent “voice” related to Express Lanes,
- Develop targeted messages needed by geographic area and corresponding agency,
- Ensure that the appropriate agency is speaking to the appropriate audience, and
- Build political and public support for the program and projects.

There are four key areas where the partnering agencies can work collaboratively to share the story, build trust and understanding, and ultimately support the Regional Express Lanes effort.

- 1) Communication Protocols
  - a. Share information, schedules, messaging, etc.
  - b. Coordinate communication in local and sub-regional jurisdictions and along corridors
  - c. Coordinate with each other and share experiences about interaction with media
- 2) Build Project Support for Express Lanes and Other Corridor-Specific Mobility Management Tools
  - a. Share information about project issues, schedules, public perception, political support
  - b. Collaboratively build support for all corridor projects
  - c. Understand and coordinate with each others’ messaging
  - d. Understand and support each others’ information needs
- 3) Messaging
  - a. Create consistent messaging and branding
  - b. Share messages related to express lanes and other mobility management strategies occurring in each corridor
  - c. Use common language to discuss issues, describe the program and describe projects
- 4) Schedules and Milestones
  - a. Coordinate schedules and related project milestones
  - b. Coordinate and prepare public/stakeholder outreach on project-level activities



MTC will meet with county partners to discuss the four topics above and collaboratively develop a plan of action for outreach to cities (e.g., public works staff, city elected officials), county elected officials, community groups, and other groups as needed (i.e., corridor-specific, needs-based stakeholder outreach) to develop support for the projects. Table 4 shows the schedule for Track 2 Outreach.

**TABLE 4: TRACK 2 PARTNER AND STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH SCHEDULE**

<b>Timeframe - 2013</b>	<b>MTC Action Item</b>
Late April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send requests for meetings to ACTC, STA &amp; CCTA with specific discussion topics and request to identify appropriate meeting attendees</li> </ul>
Late April/Early May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule partner meetings</li> </ul>
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold meetings with STA, ACTC and CCTA</li> </ul>
May – Early June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide meeting summary and action items back to CMA</li> </ul>
June – August (or other date as discussed with CMA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement action items as discussed</li> </ul>
Starting mid-May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeat process with Caltrans</li> </ul>
Starting mid-May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibly repeat process with VTA and CHP depending on needs</li> </ul>

#### **IV.C TRACK 3: Environmental Process Public Outreach**

MTC will conduct a series of public outreach meetings in the Bay Area Express Lane corridors as required through the environmental clearance process. It is likely that this outreach process will stretch out over a year, based on the environmental approval issues in each corridor. It is anticipated that the environmental public outreach will occur first in the I-680 corridor and last in the I-880 corridor. It is advantageous to decouple the projects with the fewest issues from those with more environmental issues.

Table 5 shows the anticipated environmental public outreach timing for MTC-led projects as well as express lane projects led by partner agencies.

**Timeline to be completed ...**

[illegible]

[illegible]

#### IV.D TRACK 4: Education and Marketing

This outreach effort will target potential express lane customers, giving them the specific information they need to know on how to use the lanes while motivating people to take advantage of the new travel opportunity as carpoolers, transit riders or paying solo drivers. This effort will commence well in advance of when the lanes open.

#### V. Messaging

Table 6 on the next pages lays out MTC's core express lane messages to:

- Communicate MTC's messaging strategy to partners
- Ensure all key issues are addressed
- Check MTC's messages against those of other agencies to ensure they are consistent
- Test messages with partners
- Provide messages to partners for their use as appropriate
- Maintain a library of concise messaging for collateral

The issues/message matrix is a "living document" that will be revisited and revised throughout Phase I work to ensure MTC is capturing all the public's issues and concerns and developing appropriate messaging that is consistent and concise in response. As needed, messages will be selected from Table 6 to build outreach tools such as the website, fact sheets, FAQs, videos, presentations etc. to meet different audience needs. In general, the messages tell the following story:

The messages are organized into seven categories to address a variety of issues. More detail on the specific messages is included in the Plan.

Issue	Message Category
1. Why is the region (or MTC) pursuing express lanes?	Benefits
2. How is the system defined?	System Coordination
3. How is the region deploying express lanes?	Implementation/Delivery
4. How is the region paying for express lanes and how will the revenue be used?	Funding & Revenue
5. What about other options like carpooling and transit?	Transit & Rideshare
6. Are express lanes fair?	Equity
7. Once operational, how will people use express lanes?	Operations

The messages identified in Table 6 are applicable to all the audiences identified in Section III. Some topics, however, will be of greater interest to certain stakeholder groups and in those cases MTC may have target-audience-specific messaging to be incorporated into a fact sheet or presentation aimed

specifically at this audience. Most of these target-audience-specific messages will be determined in the future, although some are included in Table 6.

**TABLE 6: BAY AREA EXPRESS LANES MESSAGING MATRIX**

Topics/Issues	Primary Audience Messaging	Supplemental Target Audience Messages
<b>BENEFITS</b>		
Choice	Express lanes give solo drivers the new choice to avoid slow traffic by paying to use the lane when they absolutely have to be somewhere on time.	<i>Most of these are TBD. The intent is to develop additional messages for a targeted audience.</i>
Reliability	Express lanes are managed to ensure vehicles travel at 45 miles per hour or higher, so reliability and time savings are maintained.	
Efficiency/Better use of freeway capacity	When solo drivers use express lanes, congestion <u>can be</u> reduced in other lanes, improving traffic flow for all drivers and reducing the need to construct more general purpose freeway lanes.	
Faster Transit/Carpool	By adding lanes to fill gaps between existing High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, the express lane network allows buses, vanpools and carpools to avoid traffic congestion more continuously on Bay Area freeways.	
<b>SYSTEM COORDINATION</b>		
Network Description	Upon completion in 2035, the Bay Area will have 550 miles of express lanes operated by MTC, the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) and the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC). These agencies, along with the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) and the Solano Transportation Authority (STA), are working closely together to convert	

Topics/Issues	Primary Audience Messaging	Supplemental Target Audience Messages
	<p>existing carpool lanes and to close gaps in the carpool network by adding more lanes.</p> <p>The result will be a cohesive network that offers an effective travel option for all Bay Area commuters.</p>	
Operators	<p>MTC, the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC) and the Valley Transportation Commission (VTA) will collaboratively operate express lanes in the Bay Area. MTC will operate 270 miles of express lanes on freeways in Alameda, Contra Costa and Solano Counties, including I-80, I-680 and I-880 as well as on the westbound approaches to the San Francisco-Oakland Bay, San Mateo and Dumbarton Bridges. ACTC and VTA will operate 280 miles of express lanes in Alameda and Santa Clara counties including I-580, I-680, US101, SR-85 and SR-237.</p>	
Branding	<p>MTC-operated: “Bay Area Express Lanes”</p> <p>ACTC-operated: “Alameda County Express Lanes”</p> <p>VTA-operated: “Silicon Valley Express Lanes”</p> <p>BATA Toll Bridges: FasTrak</p>	
One Tool among Many	<p>Express lanes complement other corridor-specific strategies to keep traffic moving on Bay Area freeways like clearing accidents quickly, posting travel advisories, and ramp metering.</p>	

Topics/Issues	Primary Audience Messaging	Supplemental Target Audience Messages
Why express lanes?	Bay Area highways have consistently ranked among the worst in the nation for traffic congestion. Express lanes have been proven to be a successful tool to manage freeway congestion locally and in other parts of the country. An express lane network will create a reliable, congestion-free travel option that makes better use of existing vehicle capacity in carpool lanes.	
Corridor-specific Issues	TDB	
FUNDING & REVENUE		
Double Taxation	<p>Once the HOV lanes are converted to express lanes, payment for and use of express lanes is voluntary for those solo drivers who choose to increase reliability of their trip. The toll paid by solo drivers is buying two new services: A) access to a lane the driver previously could not use at all and B) a reliable trip.</p> <p>Additionally, the tolls are true user-fees in that all revenues are reinvested in MTC’s express lane corridors for operations and maintenance, enforcement, and further transportation enhancements.</p> <p>In the long run, converting HOV lanes to express lanes can save tax-payer dollars by maximizing use and available capacity of the HOV/Express Lane, thus postponing the need to build additional lanes which costs more money</p>	
Dollars used to finance projects	Toll revenue from the first express lane project is required to be spent within the express lanes corridors and will be used to fund day-to-day operations, such as enforcement, and to help finance completion of the network.	



Topics/Issues	Primary Audience Messaging	Supplemental Target Audience Messages
Revenue Use	Toll revenue from converting existing HOV lanes to express lanes is required to be spent within the express lanes corridors. The first priorities for express lane toll revenues are lane management, enforcement and closing gaps in the HOV lane network.	<p>MTC is funding transit improvements with non-toll revenues, which is consistent with San Diego and LA, where transit expansion is being funded with federal grants and sale taxes; not with revenues from express lane tolls.</p> <p>When the first lane conversions (150 miles) and gap closures (65 miles) are complete, and when we have established a track record on revenue and cost, then it makes sense to consider whether to build the remaining extensions, which tend to be much more expensive, or to stop and invest revenues in transit or other improvements in the express lane corridors.</p>
<b>TRANSIT &amp; RIDESHARE</b>		
Investment in other options	Investing in express lanes is an investment in transit, carpooling and vanpooling, since the primary reason the Bay Area is building express lanes is to fund a continuous HOV network and improve reliability for those modes.	
Benefits to carpooling and transit	Closing gaps in the HOV network provides more freeway corridors where carpools, vanpools and transit are guaranteed reliable travel times. In	

Topics/Issues	Primary Audience Messaging	Supplemental Target Audience Messages
	<p>addition, once the lanes become express lanes, solo drivers using the lanes illegally will become paying vehicles. By pricing the lanes to respond to demand, the express lanes – and the carpools and transit vehicles in them - will move at speeds of at least 45 MPH, which is required by law. In some regions, such as in San Diego, carpooling has increased with introduction of express lanes. This in part reflects the addition of new lanes but is also likely because the toll for non-carpools provides an indicator of the value of carpooling.</p>	
What about transit investment?	<p>The Bay Area is investing in transit along with express lanes. 65% of PlanBayArea revenues are going to transit between now and 2040, a greater percentage than in Sacramento, LA or San Diego. The remaining 35% will be invested in roads and bridges, which includes the express lane program.</p>	<p>The Bay Area has invested in a substantial increase in express bus service with Regional Measure 2, which includes funding for both transit capital projects and bus operations in many of the express lane corridors.</p>
Why not invest in transit or ridesharing instead of express lanes?	<p>Future express lane toll revenue is the predominant funding source for Bay Area Express Lanes. That means that forgoing express lane development would not free up these funds to invest in transit or ridesharing.</p>	
Bay Area's investment in transit	<p>The Bay Area has invested, and continues to invest, in transit and ridesharing at higher levels than other regions in California.</p>	<p>Slides available with comparison data to other CA regions.</p>
Bay Area's investment in ridesharing	<p>The Bay Area has committed \$23.5M to the Regional Rideshare Program through 2019, or about 3.4M per year, maintaining its robust commitment to ridesharing. An additional \$6M is committed to funding efforts to maintain and increase the number of vanpools, with the goal of sustaining</p>	<p>Slides available with data comparison to other CA regions.</p>

Topics/Issues	Primary Audience Messaging	Supplemental Target Audience Messages
	the investment long-term.	
Effects on Existing Users	Carpoolers and vanpoolers will benefit from the express lane program through better lane management and incident response than is available in HOV lanes today. This will help keep the HOV lanes operating efficiently.	
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Disproportionate Benefits	MTC conducted outreach to low-income and minority communities along express lane corridors in the Fall 2012 and found that these populations see the importance of the choice express lanes offer solo drivers. 62% of survey respondents said they'd be willing to pay to use the lanes.	
Affordability	Even though high-income households travel by car more frequently than lower- and middle-income households, usage of toll lanes was found across all income groups in an Orange County express lane users study. Among travelers on Minnesota's I-394, a survey found that more than 50% used the express lanes at least once in the first year of lane operations, regardless of income level.	
Mitigations	Low-income travelers will not be required to use the lanes, and data from other express lanes show that low-income travelers do choose to pay for express lanes (though less often than higher income drivers). In addition, low income travelers will receive benefits from the express lane network even without paying to use the lanes through more reliable travel times for carpools and buses and possibly overall gains in freeway speeds.	<p>MTC and BATA are reviewing comments raised in focus groups and surveys of low-income travelers and how they relate to the need for mitigations.</p> <p>Over a decade of data from Orange and San Diego Counties shows that the</p>

Topics/Issues	Primary Audience Messaging	Supplemental Target Audience Messages
	<p>Express lanes around the country have proven very popular with solo drivers, transit users and carpoolers from all income levels because they provide people with a choice for reliable travel if they want or need it. The express lane offers “congestion insurance” for those seeking efficient travel.</p>	<p>majority of drivers - high and low income - use express lanes as a form of "congestion insurance" - whether it is a businessperson late for a meeting or a parent running late to pick up a child at day care.</p>
<b>IMPLEMENTATION/DELIVERY</b>		
Scheduling	<p>Upon completion in 2035, the Bay Area will have 550 miles of express lanes operated by MTC, the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) and the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC). These agencies, along with the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) and the Solano Transportation Authority (STA), are working together to convert existing carpool lanes and to close gaps in the carpool network by adding more lanes.</p> <p>The schedule for Phase 1 which is HOV lane conversions includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Review 2013 – 2014</li> <li>• Design &amp; Construction 2013 – 2015</li> <li>• First of Phase 1 Corridors Operational end of 2015</li> </ul>	
Phasing	<p>MTC plans to build out the Bay Area Express Lanes by first converting 150 miles of existing carpool lanes into express lanes, and later constructing another 120 miles of new express lanes to fill gaps in the existing carpool lane system.</p>	<p>MTC is completing the most cost-effective lanes first. Tier 1 projects convert existing HOV lanes to express lanes and have the highest benefit-to-</p>

Topics/Issues	Primary Audience Messaging	Supplemental Target Audience Messages
		<p>cost ratios of 5. Tier 2 projects are gap closures with a lower benefit-to-cost ratio of 3. After Tier 2, additional analysis will occur to ensure the continued cost-effectiveness of express lane development compared to other strategies that reduce congestion like enhanced transit service.</p>
Process/ approvals	<p>While the project approval process is complicated, the basic milestones are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project initiation</li> <li>• Project approval/environmental clearance</li> <li>• Design</li> <li>• Acquire Rights of Way</li> <li>• Obtain all permits and agreements</li> <li>• Construction</li> <li>• Opening</li> </ul>	
Construction	<p>MTC's first of these projects ("Phase 1") will convert approximately 90 miles of existing carpool lanes into express lanes on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I-680 in Contra Costa County between Alcosta Road and Livorna Road;</li> <li>• I-880 in Alameda and Santa Clara counties between Marina/Lewelling and State Route 237;</li> <li>• I-80 in Solano County between Red Top Road and Air Base Parkway;</li> <li>• the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge westbound approach;</li> <li>• the San Mateo Bridge westbound approach; and</li> <li>• the Dumbarton Bridge westbound approach.</li> </ul>	

Topics/Issues	Primary Audience Messaging	Supplemental Target Audience Messages
<b>OPERATIONS</b>		
Hours of Operation	Initially, MTC's express lanes will likely operate during current HOV hours. Eventually, hours of operation may be expanded if traffic warrants.	
Lane Configuration	MTC's express lanes will operate with an open access design so drivers can enter and exit the lanes at any point. There may be some locations where lane access is restricted for safety reasons.	
Carpools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carpools, transit and other qualifying vehicles have priority use of express lanes for free.*</li> <li>• Toll-free vehicles must use "switchable" FasTrak® toll tags on Bay Area Express Lanes.</li> <li>• The switch allows the driver to indicate if they are driving alone or as a carpool.</li> </ul> <p>*Carpools on bridges are not free.</p>	
Toll Tags/Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tolls will only be collected during posted express lane hours of operation.</li> <li>• Tolls will be collected electronically via FasTrak®, just like on Bay Area toll bridges.</li> <li>• Carpools, transit and other qualifying vehicles use the lanes free of charge by using a switchable toll tag to designate their status.</li> </ul>	
Dynamic Pricing	To effectively manage traffic congestion, toll rates to use the express lane will vary based on the number of cars using both the express lane and the adjacent mixed-flow lanes. As traffic increases, toll rates will climb to limit	

Topics/Issues	Primary Audience Messaging	Supplemental Target Audience Messages
	the number of paying customers entering the express lane. Toll rates will decrease as traffic declines to encourage more vehicles to use the express lane. Express lanes will be priced to ensure vehicles travel at least 45 miles per hour per Federal standards.	
Toll Zones and Pricing	<p>An express lane corridor may be split into multiple toll zones. A typical toll zone will be between 3 and 5 miles long. Each toll zone will have overhead electronic pricing signs to show how much it costs to use the express lane. Pricing signs will display two prices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The top price will be the guaranteed price to travel within the current toll zone.</li> <li>• The bottom price will be the guaranteed price to travel to a major destination at the end of a different toll zone.</li> </ul> <p>The toll system will charge the full zone toll where the vehicle is first detected in the lane.</p>	
Enforcement	The California Highway Patrol (CHP) will enforce carpool occupancy requirements and moving violations using a combination of new tools provided by the express lane toll system and traditional visual checks. In addition, the toll system will automatically enforce the requirement that all vehicles in the express lane have a toll tag.	
Customer Service	Customer service will be provided by the FasTrak <sup>®</sup> customer service center.	

## **VI. Communications Protocol**

### The Need:

Because the Regional Express Lane Network is being developed by five partner agencies and operated by three partner agencies, the following tensions exist about communicating messages:

- The public needs one place to find information, but at the project level, partner agencies can only speak for the projects they are delivering.
- It is important to portray the broader network, while not giving false impressions about which agency is responsible for delivery or operations.
- The public and media does not care about the agency dynamics behind the scenes and will want simple messages about the entire network, but this may not always be feasible to deliver.
- Partner agencies desire to be respectful of each others' messaging needs while ensuring their own messaging needs are met.

### The Approach

#### Develop Common Key Messages

- Develop key messages
- Test the messages with partners to ensure they can be used in common
- Keep the messages succinct
- Provide two (or more) levels of messaging on a topic as the need arises to address focused concerns raised by different audiences.
- Create different communication tools using the messages as appropriate (e.g., presentations, fact sheets, etc.)

#### Present One System to the Public

- Develop an interactive and visual tool to present the regional network as a summation of its projects. Link to project leads for project-level information and rely on partner agencies for project-level information.
- Jointly plan an approach to delivering messages in different corridors with the intent of building project and program support and addressing local concerns.
- Share outreach materials in advance of public meetings or stakeholder outreach with other members of the PIWG.
- Use jointly developed messages to communicate to the public.
- Frame project communication within the framework of the regional network.
- Through the PIWG, share project talking points, presentations, Fact Sheets, FAQs, etc.
- Share communications or questions that arise through the outreach process that are related to other agencies' projects.



- Share comments gathered through websites that relate to other agency's projects.

#### Schedule Coordination

- Share project public meeting schedules,
- Maintain an accurate public meeting calendar,
- 

#### Media Coordination

- Alert others to media inquiries and share outcomes



## VII. Next Steps

The next steps to further develop and implement this approach are:

1. Perform “Track 2 Partner & Stakeholder” outreach strategy defined in Section IV.
2. Review key issues/messages with partner agencies and stakeholders to ensure accuracy and consistency.
3. Continue to identify key issues/concerns such as:
  - a. Lack of understanding about express lane benefits and why the region is building them
    - i. Desire to invest in transit instead
    - ii. Distrust of process and government
    - iii. One strategy of many
  - b. Concerns about paying money for express lanes when already taxed to build them
  - c. Environmental justice concerns; express lanes benefit the wealthy more
  - d. Impacts to carpoolers
  - e. Project financing – local vs. regional revenues
  - f. Implementation of the conversion and how this will impact drivers (operation)
  - g. Traffic flow and safety concerns
  - h. Enforcement
  - i. How the revenues will be used
4. Test and refine supporting facts for key topics / issues of concern.
5. Test and refine communications protocols with partner agencies.
6. Develop materials tailored for specific audiences (ex. Topic specific fact sheets/flyers)
  - a. Materials for broad/general audience
    - i. 30-second Public Service Announcements (PSAs) or video clips on overall project and benefits
    - ii. Key messages that can spread through the community
      1. Use traditional media, website, social media
  - b. Materials for targeted audiences (advocacy groups, partner agencies, elected officials, businesses)
    - i. Canned presentation to be used in a speakers bureau
    - ii. Specific messages tailored for each group
    - iii. Facts and figures about the project
      1. Use fact sheets, website, direct mail, emails
7. Schedule and prepare materials for Public Meeting for 680 Corridor (environmental process public outreach of Phase 1 Project)
8. Develop/Revise schedule for roll-out and additional communication activities within 680 and 880 Corridor
9. Continue to revise and update Track 1 “Public Awareness and General Education” materials (e.g., website, fact sheet and FAQs).